

Summer Worship at First UNJ - 2022

Awakening and Regeneration - Chris Baglieri

Welcome and Greet Each Other

[Please say who you are, why we are gathered as we are this summer]

First Unitarian New Jersey is working to incorporate Land Acknowledgments into our practice. Land Acknowledgment is a sacred practice that counters racial oppression and erasure of Indigenous People. It's a calling to remember whose Ancestral Land on which we live, work, raise our families and worship. Recognizing, as colonial settlers, it is our collective responsibility to critically interrogate the histories, present-day patterns of settler colonization and oppression."

We meet today, acknowledging that we live on the stolen Traditional Land of the Lenni-Lenape People.

Chalice Lighting - read by member

This is the light that is lit for everyone who comes into the world.

Bear this light to others, one by one.

Let the flame go from life to life till all [are awakened] ...with its warmth.

Tell that the light means wisdom

Tell that the light means kindness

Tell that the light means understanding

Tell that the light means tolerance

Tell that the light means sacrifice

Tell that the light is a vision of a fairer world.

Tell that this is the light that is lit for everyone who comes into the world.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/chalice-lighting/symbol-light-chalice-lighting>

Today's Theme

The theme of today's meeting is "Awakening and Regeneration," which is perhaps appropriate, as we move towards the beginning of our next church year, a year in which our community will be challenged to come together in new ways to contemplate our future.

We begin with these opening words:

*A Dream Awakening
by Rev. Elizabeth Strong*

*Today we celebrate a dream awakening.
Today we worship with renewed hope in our hearts.
Today we act on an audacity of hopes and dreams for the future.*

*Today we begin the hard work for justice, equity and compassion in all human relations,
for today is a day like no other and it is ours to shape with vision and action.*

Let us worship together and celebrate a dream awakening.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/opening/129658.shtml>

Sharing Joys, Sorrows, Milestones

Introduction of today's theme - Opening Quotes

What do we think of as "Awakening" and how is this potentially different from the idea of "enlightenment?"

Reading from the bowl

"Awakening is not a thing. It is not a goal, not a concept. It is not something to be attained. It is a metamorphosis. If the caterpillar thinks about the butterfly, it is to become, saying 'And then I shall have wings and antennae,' there will never be a butterfly. The caterpillar must accept its own disappearance in its transformation. When the marvelous butterfly takes wing, nothing of the caterpillar remains." *Alejandro Jodorowsky*

"We awaken by asking the right questions. We awaken when we see knowledge being spread that goes against our own personal experiences. We awaken when we see popular opinion being wrong but accepted as being right, and what is right being pushed as being wrong. We awaken by seeking answers in corners that are not popular. And we awaken by turning on the light inside when everything outside feels dark." *Suzy Kassem*

Hell & Heaven by Daniel Goleman

A belligerent samurai, an old Japanese tale goes, once challenged a Zen master to explain the concept of heaven and hell. The monk replied with scorn, "You're nothing but a lout - I can't waste my time with the likes of you!"

His very honor attacked, the samurai flew into a rage and, pulling his sword from its scabbard, yelled "I could kill you for your impertinence."

"That," the monk calmly replied, "is hell."

Startled at seeing the truth in what the master pointed out about the fury that had him in its grip, the samurai calmed down, sheathed his sword, and bowed, thanking the monk for the insight.

"And that," said the monk "is heaven."

The sudden awakening of the samurai to his own agitated state illustrates the crucial difference between being caught up in a feeling and becoming aware that you are being swept away by it. Socrates's injunction "Know thyself" speaks to the keystone of emotional intelligence: awareness of one's own feelings as they occur.

Source: [Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ](#) by Daniel Goleman

Discussion -

Name a time when you had an eye-opening or "awakening" experience, and the effect that it had on your life.

Share the Plate

Casa Freehold Video

Reflection - Reading

Discussion Questions - I hate the idea of "Wokeness," inasmuch as it seems to create distance between those who are "woke" and others. Starting out as a sense of awareness of the and I hate even more that there is a portion of our society that has managed

The term "woke police" is used, mainly, by critics of the movement as a way to negatively describe those who identify as woke and fight for social justice issues.

The term is used to claim that woke people are policing others actions and words, generally in response to backlash someone else has received for their words or actions.

For example, if a celebrity has been found to have used racist or sexist language and is being held accountable for their actions, defenders of said person may say that the “woke police” have been offended, as a way of undermining the backlash.



A sign attached to a bicycle reads “I Woke Up Today With Less Rights Than I Went To Sleep With” as abortion rights activists protest after the overturning of Roe Vs. Wade by the US Supreme Court, in Downtown Los Angeles, on June 24, 2022 (Photo by FREDERIC J. BROWN/AFP via Getty Images)

Writer, broadcaster, former barrister and [Guardian columnist Afua Hirsch](#) says: “The truth is, there are no woke police.”

Hirsch explains: "In reality, the only thing that unites the woke is an intellectual curiosity about identity and how complex, how nuanced, how rooted in disparate histories it can be. The real groupthink, the genuinely cohesive crowd, it's increasingly clear, is that of the anti-woke, the most weaponised identity of all."

Hirsch points out the irony of "the rightwing culture warriors [who] claim to support free speech" but "they seem to want minorities to shut up and stop complaining".

Video - Wake me up.

Closing Words: *We receive fragments of holiness*

by Rev. Sarah York

We receive fragments of holiness, glimpses of eternity, brief moments of insight. Let us gather them up for the precious gifts that they are, and, renewed by their grace, move boldly into the unknown.

Extinguishing the chalice - Responsive

"We extinguish this flame, but not the light of truth, the warmth of community, or the fire of commitment. These we carry in our hearts until we are together again."

Readings from the Common Bowl

“As human beings, not only do we seek resolution, but we also feel that we deserve resolution. However, not only do we not deserve resolution, we suffer from resolution. We don’t deserve resolution; we deserve something better than that. We deserve our birthright, which is the middle way, an open state of mind that can relax with paradox and ambiguity.” Pema Chödrön

“...The difference between ignorant and educated people is that the latter know more facts. But that has nothing to do with whether they are stupid or intelligent. The difference between stupid and intelligent people—and this is true whether or not they are well-educated—is that intelligent people can handle subtlety. They are not baffled by ambiguous or even contradictory situations—in fact, they expect them and are apt to become suspicious when things seem overly straightforward.” Neal Stephenson

“Listening is more than being quiet while the other person speaks until you can say what you have to say. I like the language Rachel Naomi Remen uses with young doctors to describe what they should practice: ‘generous listening.’ Generous listening is powered by curiosity, a virtue we can invite and nurture in ourselves to render it instinctive. It involves a kind of vulnerability—a willingness to be surprised, to let go of assumptions and take in ambiguity. The listener wants to understand the humanity behind the words of the other, and patiently summons one’s own best self and one’s own best words and questions.” Krista Tippett

“I feel with some passion that what we truly are is private, and almost infinitely complex, and ambiguous, and both external and internal, and double- or triple- or multiply natured, and largely mysterious even to ourselves; and furthermore, that what we are is only part of us, because identity, unlike ‘identity,’ must include what we do. And I think that to find oneself and every aspect of this complexity reduced in the public mind to one property that apparently subsumes all the rest (‘gay,’ ‘black,’ ‘Muslim,’ whatever) is to be the victim of a piece of extraordinary intellectual vulgarity.” Philip Pullman

“Many people fear nothing more terribly than to take a position which stands out sharply and clearly from the prevailing opinion. The tendency of most is to adopt a view that is so ambiguous that it will include everything and so popular that it will include everybody. Not a few men who cherish lofty and noble ideals hide them under a bushel for fear of being called different.” Martin Luther King, Jr.

“There was a wall. It did not look important. It was built of uncut rocks roughly mortared. An adult could look right over it, and even a child could climb it. Where it crossed the roadway, instead of having a gate it degenerated into mere geometry, a line, an idea of boundary. But the idea was real. It was important. For seven generations there had been nothing in the world more important than that wall. Like

all walls it was ambiguous, two-faced. What was inside it and what was outside it depended upon which side of it you were on.” Ursula Le Guin

“The root of happiness is knowing that everything changes. That’s all there is to happiness. It’s nothing you pursue. It’s living in the constant continual paradox of life. The Vedas say that the yes and the no uttered together produce the silence. We spend so much of our time trying to take the yes and the no and resolve it. Instead of being pushed into wonder and not knowing, we have whole explorations of how we deal with paradox, how we live in paradox, how we resolve paradox. The yes and the no, the complete contrariness of life, is actually only meant to move us into silence.” Margaret Wheatley

“...Mystics embrace paradox. Their practice makes them intensely aware of life’s paradoxes. They notice that although everything appears to be part of one unity, life contains many opposites. Everything is united, yet life is made up of endless polarities, such as good and bad, hot and cold, and so on. Mystics sense that things are not immediately what they appear to be and that focusing on the pairs of opposites distracts them from the experience of unity: they understand that reality is larger than the polar opposites that make it up. ...Mystics, as Rumi did through his poetry, advise us to practice seeing beyond what can be seen with the physical eye ... and thereby peacefully embrace and see beyond the paradoxes of life.” Edward Viljoen

“Speaking of salvation, Jesus and a host of other spiritual luminaries have weighed in on the subject with some counterintuitive and paradoxical wisdom. In a nutshell, it is this: ‘Don’t focus on saving yourself.... Focus on serving, saving, helping others. For if you try to save yourself, you lose yourself, yet if you seek to save others, you save both the other and yourself.’ ...When we seek to save others—with our love and our compassion we become aware of our connectedness to the larger whole. Or, as Malvina Reynolds puts it in the song The Magic Penny: ‘Love is something if you give it away, give it away, give it away. Love is something if you give it away. You end up having more.’” Rev. Richard Davis

“Rev. Charles Magistro ...[writes,] ‘Our way in religion is not the way of ease. We are called to be sailors. For many worlds exist waiting to be discovered. And not the least of them are within ourselves. It takes much persistence, courage and curiosity to look into our own depths, to come to terms with the twin mysteries of being alive and having to die, to see ourselves in new and larger ways without being dishonest about our limitations. We have only begun to discover our potential.’ Unitarian Universalism does not give you freedom from religion; it gives you freedom for religion. Here is the great paradox of our faith.” Rev. Scott Alexander